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III.

IS THE REFORMER ANY LONGER NEEDED?

THE philosophy of evolution, as applied to the problems of the physical world, is rapidly winning the victory over all opposition. Resting upon the sure foundation of known facts and necessary inductions, it has little to fear from the assaults of mere declamation, or the unbelieving conservatism which sees only danger and disaster in courageously following the truth.

But the attempt of some of the chief apostles of this philosophy to apply its teachings literally in the domain of morals and politics involves considerations of very grave moment to the cause of social progress. They tell us that society is not a manufacture, but a growth; and that civilization, therefore, is not an artificial thing, but a part of Nature—of a piece with the development of the embryo, or the unfolding of a flower. Manufacturing morals, we are told, is as unscientific as manufacturing worlds; while social progress is to be wrought out by gradual development, and not by spasms of philanthropy or sudden outbreaks of reform. It is not an accident, but a necessity, and therefore all special reforms are to be superseded by social evolution. The Clarksons and Wilberforces of a past generation must give place to the Spencers and Bagehots of the present, and thus usher in a new dispensation in the history of the race. According to Herbert Spencer, no teaching or policy can advance the work of social development beyond a certain normal rate, while it is quite possible to perturb, to retard, or to disorder the process; and, by maintaining favorable conditions, there cannot be more good done than by letting social progress go on unhindered, while an immensity of mischief may be done in the way of disturbing and distorting and repressing, by policies carried out in pursuit of

erroneous conceptions. The growth of society is thus analogous to the growth of an animal, or a plant, proceeding in a predetermined order under the influence of causes which act spontaneously, and in perfect harmony with all cosmical development. A very high authority on moral and social questions, catching the spirit of these ideas, traces a great portion of existing evils to benevolent interferences for their removal. He asserts that in this world a large part of the business of the wise is to counteract the efforts of the good, and that those only can safely and serviceably encounter social evils who can both watch and in some measure imitate God's mode of dealing with them. He tells us that the coldest tempers are generally, in matters of philanthropy, the soundest thinkers and safest guides and administrators, and that a tender-hearted statesman is almost more to be dreaded than a despot or an adventurer; while, to be worthy and efficient coadjutors with God on the great arena of the world, we must be able to borrow some of the sublime, impassive calm with which, age after age, he has looked down upon the slow progress and lingering miseries of his children. The motto of the social evolutionist is "Slow and sure;" and he exhorts us, as far as possible, to eliminate the time-element from our reckoning of human progress, and imitate Nature in her infinite patience in waiting so long for the physical world to grow into decent and comely shape. With him, human endeavors for ameliorating the condition of humanity are, of course, hinderances rather than helps, and the reformer is to be regarded as representing a type of mind no longer needed, and as destined soon to disappear under the law of the survival of the fittest. Like the mastodon, the dodo, and other creations of the past, he will become extinct, and we shall patiently and placidly look on while social evolution does the work which his ignorance and fanaticism so clumsily attempted in a ruder and less advanced stage of society.

This new gospel demands our attention. It makes its appeal in the name of science, and it has the support of great names. Its teaching is plausible, and it embodies a measure of truth. It is remarkably solacing to a certain order of minds, and we believe multitudes will be tempted to embrace it as a welcome scapegoat for their laziness or moral indifference. It arraigns all the great

reforms of the world, and would substitute a sickly moral fatalism for those deeds of heroism and self-sacrifice which have glorified human nature and lighted the world on its way to higher truth. Let us briefly consider it.

The fallacies on which it rests are not difficult to discover. In the first place, it assumes the existence of an obviously false and impossible analogy. When we are exhorted to imitate God's mode of dealing with social evils, and to become coadjutors with him by borrowing his sublime patience, it may be well to remember that we are not gods, but human beings, very limited in our knowledge and circumscribed in our sphere of action. The folly of the suggestion that we should put ourselves in the place of the Creator, in order that we may have wise and comprehensive views of our duties to our fellow-creatures, is only equaled by its sublime effrontery. Whoever believes in a Supreme Intelligence must believe that he sees the end from the beginning. The universe is his expression and breath. All its parts and appointments are the fruit of his infinite wisdom, and are seen to work together for good. What is hidden and inscrutable to us must be to him as transparent as light, and in perfect accord with justice, mercy, and truth. To talk about the patience of the Deity, therefore, is to apply the vocabulary of mortals to a Being who infinitely surpasses our comprehension. Patience is a human virtue, implying weakness and imperfection. It means enduring, suffering with meekness, sustaining pains and trials without murmuring or fretfulness, bearing trouble with equanimity. This cannot be predicated of God, whose very attributes must make him impassive in surveying the work of his hands. And even this human virtue is only enjoined upon us in encountering evils which are unavoidable; for, if we have the power to remove them, our patience under their burden ceases to be a virtue, if it does not become a vice.

Equally irrational is the notion that we may become Godlike by eliminating the element of time in dealing with the evils of society. We have no right to break away from those limitations which make us what we are, and we have no more power to do so than we have to add to our stature by taking thought. With our Creator, as we are told and believe, the universe is "an everlasting Now;" but with us the little fragment of time which

rounds out our life is simply the gateway of duty and toil. It is our providential opportunity, into which we should crowd every beneficent activity which an unselfish devotion to truth and humanity can kindle. We cannot, therefore, become coadjutors with our Maker by folding our hands and waiting upon evolution, or the cold logic of events, but by acting well our appointed part in the fleeting drama of life—by plunging into the strifes and struggles of our time, and wisely but fervently toiling for our kind. These strifes and struggles afford ample scope for our powers, and we have no right to shirk the task to which we are summoned. Evolution is God's method of operating in the natural world, and, in a qualified sense, in the moral; but it can perform no vicarious office for us as intelligent beings endowed with a conscience, who must work out our own salvation. It cannot supersede the strivings and sacrifices of good men for the race. It cannot cancel our social obligations by eloquent talk about gradual development and comprehensive views. It cannot cure the ills of society by assuring us that progress is a necessity, and that, while we may cripple and retard social development, we have no power to aid it. It cannot strengthen the hands of struggling Virtue, or increase our reverence for our Maker, by reminding us of his unruffled serenity in looking down upon the tardy progress and lingering miseries of his children. It cannot bring reproach and derision upon the world's great reforms and reformers without a corresponding blight and paralysis of the world's faith in goodness. It cannot reform society by proclaiming abstract theories of progress, while those who would smite social evils in their concrete form are branded as fanatics and men of "one idea." It cannot save the world through the leadership of men who boast of their philosophic principles, and their patience under the troubles and sorrows of their fellow-creatures. It cannot establish its doctrine of scientific fatalism without sapping the very foundation of morals. Every civilized community is scourged by some devouring evil, which invites the organized resistance of good men. Through their agency the work of social evolution goes forward, and they are without excuse if they fail to put forth their endeavors. The shortness of life and the feebleness of our powers make the time-element in our reckoning of progress all the more vital. They should render us not more

but *less* patient in dealing with curable social ills. They should incite us to lavish our efforts in the service of humanity, instead of stingily withholding them, and waiting supinely for evolution to take up our task. They should teach us to capitalize our philanthropy to the utmost, and fund it freely in deeds of active beneficence. Any one of the reforms of our day is large enough to tax the best energies of our strongest men, and all of them must lag and languish if, instead of looking to partial and immediate results through our personal exertions, we commit the solution of social problems to the working of inevitable laws.

But we observe, in the next place, that the central idea of this new philosophy is fallacious. It is not contended that the forces which rule society naturally gravitate in the direction of evil, nor is it denied that their tendency, as in the case of individual men, is toward improved conditions. If this were not true, there could be no such thing as a science of history, and the moral world would be the sport of accident and chance. We accept Mr. Bagehot's general idea of a philosophy of progress, which he so skillfully labors to enforce and illustrate; but Mr. Bagehot himself asserts that "the progress of *man* requires the coöperation of *men* for its development." It is not true that the process of civilization is a part of Nature, like the unfolding of a flower. It is not true that social progress goes on as a necessity, according to any invariable law. It is not true that laws and institutions *grow*, in the sense in which we speak of the growth of plants and animals. If these premises were valid, Mr. Spencer would undoubtedly be right in declaring that, while we can retard or disorder the process of social development, we can do nothing whatever to advance it. But the fact is that, while the process of development, in the animal and vegetable kingdoms, is achieved indirectly and unintentionally, social evolution is chiefly the result of efforts consciously put forth for the purpose. To a very large extent communities, like individuals, are the architects of their own fortunes. Evolution is ever at work; but whether it takes a forward or retrograde course must depend largely upon the voluntary action of the people, or of their recognized leaders, in adopting or rejecting particular laws or policies. Prof. Cairnes, in an article written a few years ago combating the views of Mr.

Spencer, proves from the highest critical and historical authority that the stationary condition of the race is the rule and the progressive the exception, and that the greater part of mankind has never shown the least desire that its civil institutions should be improved. He shows that on this ground, and not according to any theory of social evolution, we must account for the retrograde course of certain nations after they have reached an advanced stage of civilization; and he makes the apt quotation from Mr. Mill, that "political institutions are the work of men; owe their origin and their existence to human will. Men did not wake on a summer morning, and find them sprung up. Neither do they resemble trees, which, once planted, are aye growing while men are sleeping. In every stage of their existence they are made what they are by human voluntary agency." And this reasoning is justified by historical facts which he adduces. Rome was incalculably indebted for her later preëminence to the fortunate and timely adoption of her early code of laws. Her decline and ruin resulted from the decay of her yeomanry and her vast landed estates. The paternal despotism of China carried her up to the civilization she has attained, but is a most formidable barrier to further progress. The absolute monarchy of the Jews produced different results, because they had a peculiar body of men called prophets, the patriots and guides of their time, who were able to withstand the power of kings and priests. Not upon any invariable law, therefore, working in the direction of good or evil, but upon human agency, must the fortunes of states greatly depend. The right does not always come uppermost in the concerns of this world. The truth is often put down by falsehood and force. In his famous essay on "Liberty," Mr. Mill says Christianity itself only became predominant because the persecutions of its enemies were occasional, and separated by long intervals of propagandism. Injustice is not an appointed necessity, but neither is Justice strong enough to win in her ever-recurring conflict with the powers of evil without the help of faithful and heroic men. "We ought not to forget that there is an incessant and ever-flowing current of human affairs toward the worse, consisting of all the follies, all the vices, all the negligences, indolences, and supinenesses of mankind, which is only controlled and kept from sweeping all before it by the exertions which some persons constantly,

and others by fits, put forth in the direction of good and worthy objects." This confession of faith of John Stuart Mill, with which Prof. Cairnes enforces his argument, was the key-note of his life; and whoever thoroughly accepts it as the inspiration of his labors will be ready to work for humanity as if the fortunes of the world depended on his personal endeavors. The fortunes of the world, indeed, to a large extent, *have* depended upon the toils and struggles of just such men; while those who have looked on in indifference, or opposed all efforts at reform because they believed it wiser "to let social progress go on unhindered," have left the world little better than they found it, if they have not been positive obstructions to human welfare.

Who can look back upon the great reforms of the world, and pronounce them so many ill-fated struggles to better its condition which only deflected the path of progress from its true course? Who can gainsay the grand lesson of history so beautifully stated by Mr. Motley, that "the generation that plants is not the generation that gathers in the harvest, but all mankind at last inherit what is sown in the blood and tears of a few?" Who, that is not the slave of mere theories, would discrown the martyrs whose blood has been the seed of the Church? Who would dishonor the apostles and prophets of free thought in every age who have blazed the way of progress for the race, and made our present civilization possible? Mr. Buckle affirms that Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations" has contributed more to the happiness of man than has been effected by the united abilities of all the statesmen and legislators of whom history has preserved an authentic account. The age we live in is what we find it because of the labors and sacrifices of *all* the great souls of the past. If progress has been evolved, it has also quite as certainly been propagated. It is not simply the product of law, but the fruit of human toil and sacrifice, voluntarily embraced for the improvement and regeneration of mankind. Our churches, our educational institutions, our organized charities, our scientific associations, our various special reforms, and that marvelous instrumentality called the press, are all so many testimonies to the power of voluntary efforts purposely employed in the furtherance of human well-being, and so many practical refutations of the theory that social

development is dwarfed and deformed by attempts to improve it.

But the new doctrine is not only fallacious, but necessarily demoralizing. This is implied in what we have already said, but it needs to be particularly emphasized. It unavoidably results from the principle that social development, while it may be hindered or deranged, cannot be artificially bettered. Mr. Spencer says this doctrine "is calculated to have a *steadying* effect on thought and action." It cannot fail to produce a paralyzing effect. He admits that sanguine reformers will feel that it takes away "much of the stimulus to exertion;" and he asks, "If large advances in human welfare can come only in the slow process of things, which will inevitably bring them, why should we trouble ourselves?" This staggering question he answers by saying that "on visionary hopes, rational criticisms have a depressing influence," but that "it is better to recognize the truth." The truth which he thus frankly counsels us to recognize is the fatalism of his theory of development, and the consequent helplessness of humanity to speed its social advancement. According to this doctrine the reformer is not simply a fanatic, but a social nuisance. He is a benevolent intermeddler with a process which may be marred, but cannot be mended; and the business of wise and sober men is to counteract his mischief. The philanthropist must surrender his vocation, and his dreams of human amelioration, to men of cold tempers and comprehensive views. The patriot, who pictures to himself a possible future of renovated institutions and a regenerated state, and burns with the longing to realize his aspirations, must be put under the training of Science, while Evolution is to have free course and be glorified.

The effect of these teachings, if generally accepted, cannot be doubtful. Unquestionably, the fanaticism so commonly found in alliance with reformatory movements has wrought much mischief. No one will dispute this. Fanaticism is the epidemic of our times, whether it shows itself in special reforms, in politics, in religion, or in trade. It seems to be inseparable from human affairs, and especially all high endeavors. It certainly has its uses, nor is it easy to see how the race could have advanced without it. Worldly prudence and calculation are not the highest

virtues, nor the chief mainsprings of human progress. They are honored by the selfish and the time-serving quite as sincerely as by the worthier classes in society. The reformer often finds them the cousin-germans of cowardice, and the most formidable foes of that disinterestedness which animates his labors. The philosopher too, with his broad views and many-sided tendencies, will decline to follow him. He loves the truth, and sincerely dedicates himself to its service, but is not ready to bear witness to it by great personal sacrifices. He doubts as much as he believes, and has no taste for any form of martyrdom. One of the foremost writers and thinkers of our time tells us that profound thought, if thoroughly honest and conscientious, is deplorably apt to sap the foundations and impair the strength of our moral as well as intellectual convictions. The thinkers of the world are not its saviors. "The tree of knowledge is not that of life." "Enthusiasm," says Emerson, "is the leaping lightning, not to be measured by the horse-power of the understanding." The truth is, that real social progress is always accomplished by imperfectly aspiring toward a perfect ideal; and in this work the faculty of imagination has the chief share. It has been well said that if you destroy this faculty the condition of man will become as stationary as that of the brutes. Without the fanaticism of self-sacrifice which the imagination kindles, our civilization would be hopelessly dwarfed and mutilated. The fanaticism of the early Christians was the soil in which their faith took root; and the simple and sublime doctrines of the new religion, which now bear witness to its truth, were floated down the centuries on the errors and misconceptions of its disciples. Without the impelling fanaticism of Luther and his collaborators, their battle against Rome would never have been fought. The founder of Quakerism paid little heed to the canons of worldly wisdom, while the fanaticism of John Woolman purged the Society of Friends of the guilt of slavery, and waked such a response in other humane hearts, in the Old World and the New, that the way was thus opened for emancipation in the British West India Islands, and the ultimate abolition of slavery in the United States. It was the fanaticism of Daniel O'Connell which achieved Catholic emancipation, and made Ireland a nation. When he began his agitation nothing could have seemed more utterly and hopelessly impossible, according to all human calcula-

tion ; but his soul was so burdened with the accumulated sorrows of his country, which his matchless eloquence set to music, that he became the liberator of Ireland by thus multiplying himself among his people. It was the fanaticism of reform which repealed the English Corn-laws, in opposition to the statesmanship, the public opinion, and the educated classes of the time. If Garrison and his associates had taken counsel of the wise and sober men of America, who could see only failure and disaster in the antislavery agitation, the world-famous crusade of the abolitionists would never have been heard of, and the Southern negro would have been turned over to the "slow-and-sure" account of social evolution, through which "the sum of all villainies" would have been planted in every Northern State. It was the fanaticism of our fathers a century ago which achieved American independence ; for no unimpassioned judgment of their undertaking could have given strength to their hopes. The chances of success were in fact overwhelmingly against them. Of one thing only were they sure, and that was, that England had no right to bind them by laws in the making of which they were denied any share, and that they were ready, if need be, to offer their lives as hostages to liberty. Out of the fanaticisms of Fourier, St.-Simon, and Robert Owen, has come the organized struggle of labor which is now troubling the dreams of despots, compelling capital to respect it by its harsh machinery of strikes and trade-unions, and at the same time opening the way for the just and saving principle of coöperation. Christianity itself, the great seed-plot of reform, is the farthest thing possible from a system of logic, nor "was it accomplished by prize essays, Bridgewater bequests, and a minimum of four thousand five hundred a year." To the Jews it was a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness ; and its doctrine of perfect self-renunciation fares little better with the philosophers and scientists of to-day.

Indeed, if reforms were to be left to thinkers and scholars, and the wise and prudent, they would never be undertaken at all. The grandest efforts of heroic virtue can only be inspired by that supreme devotion to a holy cause which amounts to a fascination, and nothing less than this can call forth the enduring admiration and perfect love of mankind. This truth is illustrated in the

lives of all the world's great martyrs to liberty and high-priests of reform. If no hazards are to be braved, nothing will be attempted. None of the great agitations of the world could have passed muster, if they had been compelled in advance to go to trial on a cool calculation of the chances of success and the sacrifices involved. The reformer feels that if he would save his life he must be ready to lose it. He sees the particular cause he espouses with such vividness, from his mount of vision, and embraces it with such unreserved ardor, that its service is accepted as a divine command. The light which points his way casts all else into the shade. The fire within him consumes every doubt and fear which could beset the path of a cautious and considerate man. He accepts the philosophy embodied in Mr. Lincoln's motto of "one war at a time." If his mind were large enough to see all reforms in their just relationships, and coolly and impartially to estimate their real value and the difficulties of success, he would probably espouse none of them. The task would seem too large, and he would lack that intensity of conviction and concentration of zeal which alone could inspire the needed courage and self-forgetfulness. The very one-sidedness of reformers, their readiness to die for what they believe to be the truth, and that element of exaggeration which so often enters into their conceptions, thus become providential disguises, for which the world has reason to return thanks. Unquestionably, prudence and common-sense are qualities which cannot be prized too highly in the ordinary concerns of life. Science and philosophy have also their sovereign value, and have rendered inestimable service in checking the excesses and extravagances of reform; but the theory which would substitute social evolution for individual and organized efforts to improve society, would take the poetry out of life, and reduce humanity itself to a machine. It strikes a deadly blow at personal responsibility, and belittles human character, which is above all price. It lays its benumbing hand upon the divinest charities and sweetest humanities of the world, and pours contempt upon the sublimest displays of exalted virtue with which the history of the race has made us acquainted.

Nor is it any answer to the views we have presented to say that special reforms served their turn as a provisional necessity,

before the principle of social evolution was discovered, but are now to be thrust aside as the outgrown garments of childhood. On the contrary, we believe there never was a time when signal efforts and sacrifices for human welfare were more urgently demanded than now. The social progress already achieved, only points the way to new duties and wider fields of labor. The discussion and settlement of one question only reveals its relations to others, which logically follow. In the remote future a time may come, through the toils and struggles of humanity, when the work of reform will end in universal conformity to the moral law; but that millennial day is rather too far off to vex us with its interests. Our duty is with "the living present;" and who believes it safe to hand over the great problems of society to-day to the cold and relentless law of development? Look, for example, at our current politics. The issues which divide our great parties are as undiscoverable as they were in the year 1852. Neither of them dares face the real questions which most deeply concern the people, and upon which, alone, party organizations can be justified. Respecting the vital questions of finance and the tariff, each agrees that in particular States and congressional districts its leaders may proclaim such doctrines as will be most likely to secure local ascendancy, and thus to make its pretended "principles" the foot-ball of party success. Even their national platforms pipe the same music through different words. It has been aptly observed that half the Democrats are good Republicans, and half the Republicans are good Democrats. Their antagonisms are simply a memory and a habit, and yet party loyalty is intensified just as the uselessness of party machinery becomes more and more evident. Their heaven is power, and each is striving to reach it by despicable makeshifts and stale appeals to its traditions. We have reached one of those seasons of moral stagnation which follow revolutionary periods, and sometimes threaten the very existence of free government. By a sort of universal understanding, the word politics has become the synonym of "jockeyship." Its higher and real meaning is practically forgotten, if not openly laughed at. The old slavery question introduced conscience into our public affairs. It reached down to the very foundations of government, and touched the great springs of our national life. Heart and brain went forth in the glad

service of a great cause, and the spirit of reform was in the air. Men of the most commonplace characters were so lifted up and ennobled by the struggle that the whole land seemed ablaze with the fires of a moral revolution. We believe the hour has struck for another revival, and that it should now be the mission of the reformer to rouse the popular conscience from its deadly slumber, and inspire the conduct of public affairs with the great moralities which dignify private life. He should resolve, with all his might, to divinize instead of diabolize public life, and that the word politics shall no longer stand for venality and pelf, but the application of great and enduring principles to the public well-being. He should insist that political knaves and traders shall be sent to the rear, and their places supplied by men who really believe in God, in humanity, and in rectitude. And, as the necessary preliminary to all this, he should forthwith declare war to the death against the despotism of the caucus, and hail the independent voter as the anointed political Messiah on whom we are to believe.

But some one may ask us to be more specific, and to name some of the special reforms which yet demand attention. One of them presents itself in the financial problem. To the present generation, finance is a new issue in American politics. It is altogether unfamiliar to the customary thought of the people, because the course of our politics for more than a quarter of a century has steadily turned in other directions. The protracted and absorbing controversy respecting African slavery necessarily diverted attention from economic questions, while the war which finally swept slavery away left in its track a paper-money problem scarcely less fearful than that of the rebellion itself. Financial knowledge is now the demand of the hour, for, if financial quackery is allowed to take its place, national bankruptcy and irretrievable dishonor may be the result. There is but one way out of our dilemma, and we shall be obliged to pursue it, even should it involve as thorough an overhauling of the whole question as that through which the country was finally prepared to grapple with the slavery issue and to settle it forever. Why is the question of our currency now involved in so hopeless a muddle? Why are so many of our politicians, in dealing with it, so fearfully afflicted with mental vertigo? Why do they lead us into such a wilderness of metaphysics, and spread before us such a

famine of ideas? How shall we explain their frequent somersaults, and their marvelous performances in "ground and lofty tumbling?" It is not that the question is an inscrutable one, but it has not been considered. Until quite recently it has not found its way into our politics at all, since the old issue respecting a national bank was settled. What we need is a national education in the elements of financial knowledge, and we should be glad to see this begin in our common schools. Indeed, some of our great party leaders and latter-day statesmen seem to need this knowledge quite as much as the rank and file of the people. If it were possible, the horn-book of finance should be placed in their hands, and they should be taught, as speedily as possible, the definition of money; that something cannot be made out of nothing by an act of Congress; that real money must be dug out of the earth, and cannot be obtained by printing any denomination of it on paper; that a dollar is a silver or gold coin of the value of one hundred cents, and not any fraction of this sum, nor a mere promise to pay a dollar, which can be discharged by another promise; that a paper currency, irredeemable in gold or silver, has proved a curse to every country that has tried it, and that any scheme for relieving the indebtedness of individuals or nations without payment is a violation of the command "Thou shalt not steal." Undoubtedly, many questions in political economy as yet remain unsettled, but there are certain elementary principles of finance which are as well established as any facts of physical science; and, if they had been well taught in our schools, the men who are now preying upon the popular ignorance and disturbing the peace of the country would have been more worthily employed.

The thorough reform of our civil service is another urgent demand of the times. It has often been pronounced "the best on the planet;" but it is, in fact, a perfectly shameless system of official huckstering and political prostitution. It poisons the life-blood of the body-politic. It places the power and patronage of the Government at the disposal of trained political pickpockets, who make the very atmosphere mephitic with their familiar vices. It frames iniquity into law, and makes law the servant of iniquity. It stains the good name of our country at home and abroad. It is the root and source of the most startling bribery and corrup-

tion, breaking out in high places, and inundating the whole land with their desolating effects. It robs the people annually to the tune of millions and tens of millions, through its whiskey rings, its Indian rings, its custom-house rings, its railroad rings, and other legalized machinery which it manipulates. It reduces rapacity to a science, and elevates roguery to the dignity of an art. It has so polluted our politics and debauched the moral sense of our public servants that even so respectable a man as Senator Howe, of Wisconsin, openly defends it, and actually refers to the saturnalia of thieves who defied the country under the two Administrations of General Grant as a proof of the honesty of his party. The sovereign remedy for all this is the destruction, root and branch, of the whole system of spoils and plunder; and this will require the bold surgery of reform. It calls for an insurrection of honest men against the disciplined party Janizaries who have so long ruled them. Neither Congress nor the Executive Department of the Government will take a single step until compelled to do so by public opinion. We can no more depend upon our parties and politicians to begin the work than we can trust the dram-shops of the country to organize against their traffic. If any man doubts this, we need only refer him to the spectacle of duplicity and demagogism which our servants at Washington have exhibited in dealing with this question during the past six or seven years, and to the general chuckle of delight which followed the final abandonment of all further attempts to reform administrative abuses; while the faithlessness of the present Administration to its pledges in dealing with this issue and its slippery game of fast and loose have provoked the disgust and contempt of honest men of all parties. The remedy must come from the people, and the people must be rallied and organized against the hierarchy of rogues and malefactors who prey upon the nation and make political honesty a jest.

The labor question involves a reform of world-wide significance. The question of finance is simply a part of it. The abolition of negro slavery was a magnificent triumph of labor reform, lifting four million human beings from the condition of beasts of burden to the dignity of men. This system of chattelized humanity rested upon that false relation of arbitrary power upon

the one side, and dependence and helplessness on the other, which is the life of every form of oppression. The right adjustment of the conflict between capital and labor will emancipate all the races of men from all forms of slavery. It will consummate the work of which abolitionism was the beginning. This involves a complete revolution in our whole system of legislation and policy. The foundations of our civilization were laid in conquest and robbery, and these, under the names of feudalism and monarchy, have held the race in subjection. The remedy is radical reconstruction, and it involves the life of our institutions. "At the very commencement of society," says Mr. Thornton, in his valuable book on "Labor," "as soon as materials for its construction were brought together, its living constituents proceeded forthwith to arrange themselves in layers, the stronger, nimbler, and cunninger, climbing up on their brothers' shoulders, and occupying the higher places, and leaving to those below only the office of upholding them in their elevation." He adds, "The upper myriads may cry peace, peace, but there will be no more peace for them, on the old terms, with the lower millions." And there ought to be none. When we talk about the rights of labor, we talk about the rights of man. When we say that a fair day's work is entitled to a fair day's wages, we declare a principle which, as Carlyle says, is as "indisputable as arithmetical multiplication-tables," and which "must and will have itself fulfilled." We can no more escape it than we can escape gravitation. Our talk about democracy, and the sacredness of human rights, while capital has its foot on the neck of the laborer, is a sham and a cheat. It is the hollow dreariness of demagogism. The chief end of government is not the protection of property, but of man; and this truth must be practically illustrated in such laws as shall hold in check the power of concentrated capital in alliance with labor-saving machinery, and those giant corporations which too often control the makers and expounders of the laws, and are virtually endowed with life-offices and powers of hereditary succession. The task is a large one, and of course will require time, toil, and patience. It presents the most fearful problem with which enlightened humanity has yet been called on to deal. By the side of this labor question the old slavery issue dwindles into a trifle. It casts its portentous shadow across every civilized

land, and is rallying and organizing multiplying millions of discontented and determined men, whose just demands cannot safely be slighted. It foreshadows a conflict between the vandalism and madness of communism on the one hand and the rapacity of capital on the other, which naturally tends to provoke and inspire it, and which, as the Duke of Argyll declares, "overrides even the love of life, and silences even the fear of death." The omens of a coming storm are quite as discernible as were those which preceded the deadly struggle which at last buried African slavery in its bloody grave. Shall we heed these omens, and by wise and timely precautions seek to avert the threatened calamity, or madly resign ourselves to the reckless and pitiless principle of evolution, and thus invite the lightning of retribution which else might be conducted harmlessly to the earth?

The land question is the twin-brother of the labor question, and involves considerations equally momentous and far-reaching. "The earth is literally the leaf we feed on;" and, therefore, no question can more vitally affect humanity than the character of the laws which deal with it. This is most signally illustrated in England, whose agricultural laborers are among the most degraded human beings on earth. This is the ripe fruit of her system of land-tenures. "Time was," says the *Westminster Review*, "when, at the call of the country, the yeomen of England rose and fought and conquered her liberties. Their degenerate descendants would be more likely to fight as hirelings for any form of slavery and superstition—if, indeed, they could be got to fight at all." It is as true of England, as of any country in Europe, that "the whole energy, and knowledge, and resources of the land are barreled up in the towns." Mr. Hoskyns, in his chapter on the land-laws of that country, says: "There is not a living animal connected with the farm, from the draught-team down to the sheep-dog, that is not better lodged and looked after than the laborer and his family." He is a slave. His condition is exactly described by the definition of a slave, as given in the old codes of the Carolinas, namely, "one doomed to live without knowledge, and without the capacity to make anything his own, and to toil that another may reap the fruits." Liberty implies opportunity, self-culture, the untrammelled development and use of the powers of a man; and all these are denied him. Land-monopoly, indeed,

is slavery. A government which allows the land to become the patrimony of the few cannot be free, for the simple reason that the landholders of every country are its masters. The most stupendous system of organized robbery which scourges the world is that which strips the poor of their natural inheritance in the soil.

Are we told that this question does not concern us in the United States, since we have no laws of primogeniture and entail, and no great monopolies handed down to us as the fruit of feudal times? We answer, that, through our large grants to railway corporations, our system of Indian treaties, our swamp-land legislation, our yet unforbidden curse of land-speculation, and other forms of maladministration, we are laying the foundations of a system of serfdom almost as fearful as that which now afflicts England. In several States of our Union there are single farms of a half-million acres; and even in old Massachusetts, where liberty and local self-government had their birth in her policy of small estates, the large farms are rapidly swallowing up the small ones, while a crouching tenantry, toiling under absentee landlords, bears witness at once to the decline of agriculture and the decay of freedom. If our popular system of government is to be preserved, nothing is more certain than that our land policy must be radically reformed. And it will not reform itself. Evolution will not meet the danger, for evil and ruin are evolved, as well as good, when unchecked by human endeavors. The false steps we have taken must be reversed in the interest of justice and the rights of the people. We need such agitators and reformers as Cobden and Mill, and such missionaries as Joseph Arch. What will our vaunted freedom be worth if we suffer the canker of great estates to eat away the life of our yeomanry? What refuge will be left for us against the unhealthy growth and fearful domination of our chief cities, if a great system of centralization in agriculture is to palsy the manhood of our "rural districts," and give us such a breed of cultivators as those of England? These questions demand an answer from every believer in democratic government. They take hold of our social well-being and our national life; for—

"A bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed can never be supplied."

The reformer is needed in dealing with still another question. We have lately commemorated the nation's first centennial. We fitly honored the deeds of the famous men who declared that "taxation without representation is tyranny," and threw life, fortune, and honor, into the defense of this principle. It was the key-note and ceaseless battle-cry of their grand struggle. The right of the people who paid the taxes to be heard on the question of voting them was accepted as a self-evident truth. "They who have no voice nor vote," said Dr. Franklin, "in the selecting of representatives, do not enjoy liberty, but are absolutely enslaved to those who have votes." This is as self-evident as any truth in the great Declaration. A free government is one resting upon the free choice of the people, and every person having the power of choosing has an inborn and equal right to be heard, in person or by his representative, in the management of those public interests which concern him in common with all other citizens. Idiots, lunatics, infants, and criminals who have forfeited their right, are necessarily precluded from any share in the exercise of political power; but no other exceptions can be made consistently with the natural rights of man. An intelligent human being, innocent of crime, yielding his obedience to the government, answerable to it in his person and property for disobedience, and yet denied any political rights, is a slave. If this is not true, then nothing is true. But our fathers were not ready to apply this truth in its complete length and breadth. They did not perfectly keep step to the logic of their own avowed principles. They lived in the twilight of the political gospel they proclaimed, and scarcely dreamed of the high-noon of democracy which has since lighted up the political horizon. Accordingly, they withheld the ballot from the poor man on account of his poverty. This was done in all the States in the early years of the Government. As a nation, we have long since outgrown this folly. The negro was denied any share in the exercise of political power on account of the color of his skin, or that American prejudice which had been evolved from the institution of slavery. But slavery has perished, and the principles of our fathers have found another application in the conversion of the negro into a citizen and a voter. We have now no qualification for the ballot founded on race, or color, or property, or any educational requirement;

and yet we have twenty million citizens in the United States who are compelled to pay their taxes and obey the laws, while they are denied any share whatever in the exercise of political power. This is done because of their sex, and is as hateful and anti-republican a discrimination as can well be conceived. An aristocracy founded on it is quite as odious and absurd as an aristocracy founded on color, or race, or any other mere accident of humanity. It cannot be defended for a moment by any believer in democracy. In the name of justice and decency, what has sex to do with the question of moral or political right? But our purpose is not now to argue the question, but only to state it, and to rank it among the grand living issues yet to be tried by the people. How it will finally be decided is not a matter of the least doubt. Our exclusion of woman from politics will take its place among the curious and startling barbarisms of the past. It is true that as yet we are only midway on our journey to universal suffrage; but that journey will be completed, because any step backward will be as impossible as any pause where we are. We are constantly enlarging the sphere of woman's occupations. We are reforming our laws respecting her personal and property rights. We are providing for her a higher education, and thus recognizing her claim to equal rights. We have already made her a citizen, and in some of the States, and as to certain positions, she is entitled to vote and hold office. There is, and there can be, no abiding-place in her progress toward perfect political equality with man. When and how this goal shall be reached, must largely depend upon the labors and sacrifices of those who would speed the work; for the toils and struggles of the abolitionists might just as wisely have been renounced, as to surrender the cause of woman's enfranchisement to the tender mercies of social evolution.

Our space will only permit us to refer to one further task which invokes the helping hand of reform, and that is the total separation of our civil and ecclesiastical affairs. Our Protestant sects complain that the pope, as the vicegerent of God on earth, not only claims supreme authority over the consciences of men, but over all human governments, and thus assails civil liberty as well as religious. They say it was the Catholic Church which defeated Mr. Gladstone's Education Bill, and inspired the Franco-

German War, while it is striving to prevent the unification of Germany, and blocking up the way of struggling liberalism in France and Spain. They affirm that this same power is waging war against our common schools, and endeavoring, by sapping and mining, to intrench itself in the United States; and that it believes our free institutions offer a better soil for the growth of its principles than the centralized governments of Europe, while plotting the overthrow of our liberty through its vast and well-drilled army of Jesuits. How shall we deal with this alleged raid upon civilization and progress? Social evolution will not meet the danger, for that has brought it to our doors, and seems to be constantly giving it strength. Shall we appeal to sectarian animosities, and array Protestantism against Catholicism in deadly strife? The thought of such a struggle between a great centralized power, always acting as a unit, and warring sects which could never be effectively rallied under a common banner, is not to be entertained for a moment. The question is not so much one of sects, or religions, as of constitutional liberty, vitally affecting the rights of all men. The Government of the United States is neither Protestant nor Catholic. It is not even Christian, Washington himself being our witness; nor is it Jewish, Mohammedan, or pagan. The Government rightfully has nothing to do with religion, and religion has nothing to do with the Government. The state has no more right to teach religion than the church has to assume the functions of the state. Our only safe ground, therefore, is the total secularization of our politics. The "concubinage of church and state" must be utterly destroyed. On this principle all can stand, irrespective of religious faith. While the state is bound to protect all men in the unmolested enjoyment of their religious opinions, it must stand entirely aloof from any sort of espousal of any form of faith. This is our safeguard against ecclesiastical domination, whether Catholic or Protestant.

And this will require an amendment of the Constitution of the United States. It declares that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," and thus places the national Government in its true position; but the individual States are left entirely free in dealing with this question. They may make the Catholic faith

or that of any Protestant sect the state religion, and levy taxes for the support of it upon those who conscientiously disbelieve in its creed. The union of church and state, which our fathers repudiated in the national Constitution, may thus be established in defiance of the rights of conscience, as was systematically done in all the colonies save one during the period of the Revolution and at the beginning of the Government. Some of them required all officers of the State to be of the Protestant faith; and even at this day religious tests are prescribed in several of them as conditions of holding office, by which the choice of fit men for the public service is foolishly restricted. In violation of the principles of our fathers, the church property of both Catholics and Protestants is exempted from taxation, thus indirectly compelling Jews, Mohammedans, theists, atheists, and freethinkers, to contribute to the support of a religion which they disbelieve, and violating the rights of conscience, which, to every reflecting man, are even more precious than the right to liberty or life. A constitutional amendment has recently been proposed in the Senate of the United States, which, if adopted, will recognize the Bible in our public schools by "divine right," and forever protect church property in its present unjust exemption; and this amendment lacked only a few votes of the two-thirds required to pass it. The growth of the ecclesiastical spirit is still further manifested by another proposed amendment, emanating from an organization called the "National Reform Association," providing for the "acknowledgment of Almighty God as the source of all authority in civil government, of the Lord Jesus Christ as the ruler of nations, and his revealed will as of supreme authority." Should this be adopted, the union of church and state would be complete, and "appropriate legislation" for the disfranchisement and punishment of heretics would undoubtedly follow. The only true remedy for these threatened dangers is the absolute divorce of civil and ecclesiastical authority. There is no middle ground on which we can stand. "Our Constitution must be changed to suit our practices, or our practices must be changed to suit our Constitution." It must be on one side or the other, and the attempt to place it on both will prove as fruitless, and it may be as disastrous, as was the effort to make our Government "half slave and half free." We oppose and denounce the assaults

of the Catholic Church upon our common schools as a monstrous interference with purely secular affairs; but our own sense of consistency and self-respect should compel us forthwith to exclude the Bible from those schools, and thus deprive that hierarchy of a very convenient and weighty apology for its course. The policy of the Catholic Church, so far as it makes itself the ally of ignorance and superstition, must be resolutely resisted; but that resistance can best be made by jealously maintaining civil liberty, and insisting upon a well-organized system of common schools and compulsory secular education. In thus standing by the equal religious rights of American citizens, we shall be invincible; for liberty and popular intelligence are the deadly enemies of every form of ecclesiastical usurpation, as they are the impregnable bulwarks of our democratic institutions. In seeking our purpose through an amendment of the Constitution, we cherish no hostility to State rights, but only an overmastering devotion to human rights. We cherish no hostility whatever to any form of religion, but would protect and defend all religions under equal laws. Nor do we fear sectarian wrangles and divisions as the result of the principles for which we contend. On the contrary, we confidently predict perpetual peace through the final removal of the chief causes of strife; and our grand aim can only fail through the criminal recreancy of the people themselves to the teachings of our fathers and the pregnant warnings of history.

And here we close our protest against the baleful heresy which has served us for our text. In confounding the distinction between physical and social evolution, it tends to confound the distinction between right and wrong. It threatens to dethrone conscience, and substitute development for duty. It exchanges liberty for necessity, and thus deals with humanity as a factor in mechanics. By committing all social questions to the working of inevitable laws, it disparages the value of human character, and trifles with human responsibility. It weakens the very foundations of virtue by belittling the motives which inspire it. It unduly exalts the intellect, and makes the follies and mistakes of good men an excuse for tearing down the sanctuary of the heart. Its ugly footprints are already visible on the other side of the Atlantic, in the halting steps of special reforms, and the growing indisposition of Government to deal with great social questions

over which its jurisdiction is clear. This is true in a measure of our own country, while the moral felonies which blacken our politics and defile the name of religion have their root, to some extent, in the same soil. This deadly mildew of modern life, this dry-rot of moral unbelief which would wither the leaf and flower of virtue, must be arrested, if we would escape social stagnation and spiritual death. We speak earnestly, because we feel deeply, when we say that by all means we must keep alive our faith in virtue, in the preciousness of character, and in personal responsibility; for, without this faith, men will content themselves with coddling their own worldly comfort, and turning every good cause adrift, while we shall be left without God and without hope in the world.

GEORGE W. JULIAN.